

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH







DR. JOHN PARSONS  
*Superintendent of Alaska Mission*

# Through the Heart of Alaska

BY WAY OF THE YUKON

By

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A BEAR TOTEM

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O most people the word "Alaska" is only a name conveying no more than the idea of a country of indefinite area in the far Northwest, inhabited by a few Eskimos, Indians, and polar bears, frozen tight the year round, and producing little else than glaciers and volcanoes; whereas its area is 590,804 square miles, out of which could be made fourteen states as large as Ohio, two more as large as New Jersey and with 334 square miles to spare. In the south and southeast, where the climate is modified by the Japan current which flows across the Pacific and washes almost its entire coast, agriculture is practicable, and a considerable variety of vegetables and cereals can be produced, which is also true of the great valley of the Yukon.

**Climate and  
Extent of  
Territory**

### WEALTH OF ALASKA

\* The great wealth of Alaska is in its fisheries and minerals, both of which are inexhaustible. Along its entire coast the fur-seal has its home, but the herd is smaller than formerly by reason of "pelagic" sealing, namely, the taking of female seals, and so reducing the annual increment through the killing of their unborn, or the starvation of the young left upon the islands while the mothers are absent in search of food in the surrounding seas. This cruelty is now prohibited in American waters by act of Congress.

**Fur Seals**

The waters of the Alaskan coast abound with salmon, and they are taken, canned, and salted, and sent throughout the world in vast quantities. Fish canneries and salteries are numerous along the entire coast line, which, including islands, measures 26,000 miles. There are now thirty companies and individual packers, occupying fifty-five canneries and twelve salteries, with a capitalization of \$22,000,000. The total product of Alaska fisheries up to 1903 was \$50,000,000. Beginning about July 1 the salmon make for the streams that empty into the coast waters, at which time they are captured in immense numbers. Fishermen are not allowed to obstruct the mouths of the streams, but they set their nets at either side

Vast  
Quantities  
of Salmon



HOW ALASKA WOULD LOOK IF IT WERE PLACED UPON THE UNITED STATES

and sometimes take thousands at a single haul. As high as 40,000 have been taken at Ketchikan at a single haul, requiring three days to remove the catch from the beach to the can-  
nery. Many will be tempted to say that this is a  
"fish story," and so it is, but I have the most satisfac-  
tory evidence of its truthfulness.

A Big Catch



## THE NEW NORTHWEST

From Seattle to Nome, by way of Skaguay, White Pass, the Yukon River, Norton Sound, and the Bering Sea, is 3,200 miles. From Seattle to Skagway, at the head of the Lynn Canal, is

**The Fringe** 1,000 miles and requires ninety-six hours by steam-  
**of the** ship. The steamer follows what is known as the in-  
**West Coast** side route; that is, the route lies among the thousands  
of islands that constitute the fringe or the ravelings  
of the west coast. These islands range in size from  
small rocky patches that are barely above the water at high tide  
to great areas more than 100 miles long, some of them 60 miles  
wide, and upon many of them are vast forests, rich mines, and  
snow-capped mountains. The steamer on her way seems to be



ALONG THE INSIDE ROUTE

"Valleys flooded by the inflowing of the Pacific Ocean"

sailing along valleys flooded by the inflowing of the Pacific Ocean. It has been my privilege to sail the waters of the West Indies, northern Europe, along the coast of Eastern Asia, and through the Inland Sea of Japan, but nowhere have I looked upon natural scenery at once so varied, picturesque, and majestic as a voyage along the west coast of North America presents, in panoramic splendor, to the vision of the traveler. The truth is that it defies description in words. Here the painter could find natural scenery which if successfully transferred to canvas would render him immortal, while

**Panoramic  
Splendor**

it is a veritable wonder world for the artist's camera. Gazing upon these mountains so varied and weird, and allowing imagination some freedom, one may see in repose the outlines of mammoth animals and the giant forms of men. At this season (July) the snow is melting and crystal waters flow down the mountains in rivulets, streams, and cascades, which from the deck of a ship have the appearance of molten silver.



THE TAKU GLACIER LIES IN A MOUNTAIN GORGE TWENTY-FIVE MILES FROM JUNEAU

## GLACIERS

In many valleys there are vast ice rivers, called glaciers, that slowly move down to the sea. Let us turn aside and look upon one of these wonderful formations known as Taku Glacier, lying in a mountain gorge 25 miles from Juneau. As we approach it, although we are ten miles or more distant, we begin to notice that ice is floating upon the water, and as we draw nearer icebergs come into view. Only one-eighth of an iceberg appears above water. We pass near one that is 30 feet above the surface, making its entire height, if it stood upon the land, 240 feet. At length the floating ice and icebergs block the way, and our steam launch can go no further. We are still more than two miles from the front wall of old Taku, but he does not seem to be more than a rifle-shot distant, and when seen

through a field glass it appears to be but a stone's cast to his base. This glacier presents a front wall of solid ice two and one-half miles long, and about one thousand feet high. Its great surface is corrugated by the action of the sun's rays, giving it the appearance of a vast cathedral adorned with thousands of pinnacles.

Glaciers are of two kinds—dead and alive. A dead glacier is one that lies in a mountain gorge and in summer, rapidly melting at its lowest level, goes down in leaping, boiling cataracts, sometimes flooding valleys in its course; while a live glacier moves slowly, constantly, irresistibly, a solid river of ice, to the sea and is broken off by waves and tides in vast masses which float away as icebergs, and become the terror of the navigators of northern seas.

## WHITE PASS

A narrow gauge railroad has been built from Skagway at the head of Lynn Canal, by way of White Pass, to White Horse, a distance of one hundred and ten miles. In surveying and constructing the line the highest skill of the civil engineer has been brought into requisition. If ever nature entered a protest anywhere against the construction of a thoroughfare for travel and commerce it is here in these mountain fastnesses; but nature's protest was ignored for the Klondike with its treasures of gold beyond. Much of the way the old trail, upon which many a weary gold seeker tramped with aching back and weary feet, and along which many laid down their packs to take them up no more, is in view from the car window. White Pass, the highest point on the road, is three thousand feet above sea level. Here the boundary line between Alaska and British Columbia is reached, and we pass from the protecting folds of the Stars and Stripes to the equally protecting folds of the Union Jack. Very appropriately here the national emblems of the United States and Great Britain float from neighboring flagstaves. At White Pass station we are above the snow line, and although it is the fifth of July it is so cold that heavy overcoats are in de-

mand. The railroad lies through a notch in the mountain range, above which on either side peaks rise to the height of several thousand feet.



NATURE'S PROTEST IGNORED

The Narrow Gauge Railroad from Skaguay to White Horse

## WHITE HORSE

White Horse is on a tributary of the Yukon River and at the highest point of steam navigation. The town has a population of about five hundred people, living in log cabins, shanties, and canvas tents. Here we take passage on the steamer

Upper Reaches of the Yukon      White Horse and pass along Fifty Mile River into Lewis River at the mouth of the Hootalinqua, and on to Fort Selkirk, where it joins the Pelly, the two constituting the great Yukon River, which flows along a valley

of varying width walled by low mountain ranges on either side and covered with a dense growth of fir and birch. There are many places where the valley broadens and with soil rich enough to produce bountifully were it brought under cultivation. Through the valleys of the Yukon and its tributaries flows one of the vast river systems of the world. From White Horse to Saint Michael is about 2,100 miles, one of the greatest continuous lengths of river navigation in the world. The Yukon is

**The Northern  
Amazon**

the Amazon of North America, carrying a third greater volume of water to the Bering Sea than does the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico. The season for navigation lasts only about four months, beginning the first of June and closing early in October. The ice forms first at the bottom of the river and is called "anchor ice," and later



NEAR THE SUMMIT OF WHITE PASS

on the surface. The flow of the river during the winter is mainly between the lower and the upper ice. Very often the water breaks through the upper ice, when it quickly freezes, making the surface exceedingly rough and difficult for sled travel.

Where the surface ice becomes thin by reason of the underflow it is dangerous for foot and sled travelers.

## DAWSON

The first place of importance after leaving White Horse, 450 miles distant, is Dawson, the capital of Yukon Territory, Dominion of Canada, and the center of the Klondike gold mining region. Gold was discovered here in 1896, and the great rush of gold-seekers commenced in the year following. A year later Dawson had a population of 10,000, and the entire Klondike country 30,000. At the present time the whole population probably does not exceed 12,000, of which Dawson has less than 5,000. Two things have mainly caused this decrease of population: first, the recent discovery of rich gold deposits near Fairbanks, Alaska; and, second,

**A Mushroom  
Gold Camp**

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ON THE YUKON  
"The Amazon of North America"

the royalty levied by the Canadian government upon all the gold taken from the mines. At first the royalty was ten per cent, but it is now reduced on account, no doubt, in large part, of the exodus to Fairbanks, to two and one-half per cent. The dwelling and business houses are without exception built of wood and are of the cheapest quality. Many dwellings are only very small cabins and shanties, and the wonder is that the occupants can be in any sense comfortable during the long cold winters, when not infrequently the mercury drops to sixty below zero.

**Cabins and  
Shanties**

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A drive of thirteen miles up the Klondike and Bonanza Creeks

reveals in part the extent to which placer mining was once carried on and its present limitations. While a very considerable amount of mining is still in progress, far the larger number of mines are now either unworked or abandoned. Many believe that the lowest point of depression has been reached, and it is claimed that already there is the beginning of an upward tendency. Last year the amount of gold taken out was \$10,000,000, the lowest point reached since 1898, while the total amount upon which royalty has been paid since 1897 is \$120,000,000.

## PLACER MINING

Placer mining is no easy task in the Klondike, as the gravel in which the gold is found is frozen solid. Anywhere in the Yukon country ice is reached in summer at a depth of two or three feet. In a street in Dawson I saw a ditch out of which solid blocks of ice were taken at a depth of less than three feet. The houses stand on ice foundations. The pastor of the Presbyterian Church stated to the writer that the Presbyterian Hospital, two stories high, built of logs, stands upon ice. The unfrozen surface was shoveled away, and the first logs were laid upon the frozen earth and covered with sawdust to a depth of about two feet, and although the edifice was erected several years ago there is no indication that the foundation is giving way. One of the judges of the Superior Court of Yukon Territory told the writer that he knows by personal observation of a shaft being put down 120 feet, without going below ice, and another gentleman states that he knows of a shaft 260 feet deep all the distance through solidly frozen earth. In taking out gold miners often dig trenches two or three feet deep and fill them with wood, which set on fire melts the adjacent ice, after which the gravel is washed and the gold secured. In the more extensive mines steam is being used to melt the ice. Steel tubes with sharp points numerous perforated are driven into the frozen gravel, and steam is turned into the tubes, which thaws it out, after which the gravel is hoisted by steam power in large iron

buckets and put through the washery, which eliminates the gold. It is claimed that the ice in the Klondike country makes it the poor man's opportunity, for the reason that water being scarce, mining machinery, which requires large capital, is not extensively employed, giving the man with pick, shovel, and pan a chance to make a living and possibly a fortune. There are four denominations with church edifices in Dawson-Presbyterian, Methodist (both Canadian), Church of England, and Roman Catholic. The Presbyterian and Roman Catholic each has a hospital, which has afforded shelter and healing to many a stranded and helpless fortune seeker.

The distance from Dawson to Fairbanks by the Yukon and Tanana Rivers is 1,000 miles, 700 miles on the former and 300 on the latter. At Eagle we again cross the line between the possessions of Great Britain and the United States, where our steamer is held twelve hours while revenue officers search the baggage of passengers and cargo. I have entered the ports of, and crossed the dividing lines between, many countries on both hemispheres, and I regret to say that the United States custom laws are the most vexatious to a traveler I have ever encountered.

**Vexatious  
Customs  
Regulations**

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## YUKON FLATS

A short distance from Circle City, which, notwithstanding its pretentious name, is only a straggling village with a very small number of inhabitants, nearly all of whom are wretchedly poor

**A River Sixty  
Miles Wide**

Indians, we enter the Yukon Flats, through which the Yukon River flows for 270 miles, having an average width of from 20 to 60 miles. This entire area was once a lake, but on its southwestern boundary a gash

160 miles in length has been slowly cut through the mountains by the continuous flow of the waters to a depth sufficient to drain the lake. Through this vast tract, dotted with innumerable islands, the river meanders in numerous channels of varying depth, forming in many instances bayous, sloughs, and lagoons, frequently cutting new channels and again forming sandbars where but recently the deepest currents flowed, making



it the terror if not the despair of the navigator. Special pilots are employed by navigation companies whose duty it is to watch the changing channels and guard the steamers against being stranded. But notwithstanding their vigilance and skill, it is not unusual for steamers to be caught in these treacherous shoals. The steamer "Seattle No. 3," upon which I was a passenger, ran upon a sandbar almost immediately upon entering the flats, where she remained seventy-two hours struggling vainly for freedom, when the steamer "Susie" came along and took off the



AN INDIAN VILLAGE ON THE YUKON FLATS

impatient passengers, but leaving the crew of her unfortunate sister to struggle on until by unloading her freight upon a neighboring sandbank and the use of powerful machinery and steel wire cable they might drag her into the channel, reload her cargo, and continue the voyage. The lower Yukon Flats are far more extensive than the upper. They are probably 500

**The Lower Flats** miles in length, and vary in width from a few miles at the upper northeast limit to 400 miles at the river's mouth. Through these extensive flats the Yukon River flows in many channels, forming at its mouth a vast delta and having more the appearance of a great inland sea studded with islands than of a river flowing on to lose itself in the ocean.

### ARCTIC CIRCLE

At about 3:30 A. M., July 17th, we cross that imaginary line known as the Arctic Circle, and for about three hours we are voyaging in the Frigid Zone. Had we been here twenty-five

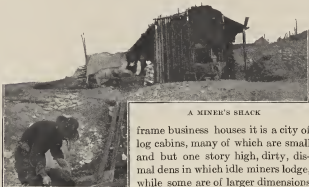
days earlier we might almost have seen the midnight sun, for at this point, June 21st to 25th, the sun is below the horizon only thirty minutes out of the twenty-four hours. During one of

**Daylight** the nights spent upon the sandbar when the sky was almost cloudless the writer watched the sun go down  
**All Night** at 10:45 P. M., and rise again at 1:15 A. M., having been below the horizon two and one half hours. During the period of disappearance daylight was but slightly diminished, scarcely more than would be caused in the States by a clouded sky at high noon. At this season of the year there is no night in this part of the world; but at midwinter for six weeks there is no day. Striking an average for the year, they have the same amount of daylight and darkness as have the people who live at the equator.

### FAIRBANKS

At Fort Gibbon, where two companies of United States soldiers numbering sixty-five each are stationed, we change steamers and begin the ascent of the Tanana River to Fairbanks, named in honor of the Vice-President of the United States, where

**Placer Mines** within a radius of thirty miles extensive placer gold mines have been discovered. The site upon which the town stands was three years ago an undisturbed wilderness. Now it has an estimated population of 3,500. Except a few



A MINER'S SHACK

frame business houses it is a city of log cabins, many of which are small and but one story high, dirty, dismal dens in which idle miners lodge, while some are of larger dimensions

and in some instances two stories high. Not a few of them are neatly constructed, and usually where wives are in charge they are tastefully furnished, cleanly, and attractive. The streets are almost entirely unimproved, except that in the business localities and the better residence parts there are plank sidewalks. There are

**Saloons and**      about twenty saloons, each one paying a license fee of  
**Schools**         \$1,500. The sale of intoxicating liquors was absolutely prohibited in Alaska for several years after American occupation, but now, by act of Congress, it is not only legalized but is made almost the only source of support for public schools in incorporated towns. In a town where the population is 500 and less than 1,000 the license fee is \$500, and where the



*Courtesy of Leslie's Weekly*

"EVERYWHERE THE PEOPLE SAY, 'NO SALOONS NO SCHOOLS,'  
AND THE SALOON KEEPERS POSE AS PUBLIC BENEFACTORS"

population is 1,000 and less than 1,500, \$1,000, and where the population is 1,500 or over, \$1,500. One half of the license fees goes to the support of the public schools. Where there is no saloon there can be no public school, as other sources of revenue are insignificant. The larger the number of saloons in a town the larger the school fund. Every year there is a new enumeration taken to ascertain what the license fee shall be. The saloon keepers try to keep the number down so that their license fee will be small, while the school directors try to keep the number up so as to make the school revenue as large as possible. Every school-teacher is humiliated with the fact that his salary comes almost exclusively and directly from the saloons, and every

parent who has any decency is put to shame by the fact that if his child has school advantages it is because of a revenue derived from vice. The internal revenue system of our government which makes the manufacture and sale of intoxicants one of the chief sources of its support is bad enough, but nowhere else has it descended to the infamous policy imposed upon Alaska, of making the public schools of incorporated towns almost wholly dependent for their existence upon the most "gigantic crime of crimes" ever perpetrated upon human society. Everywhere the people say, "No saloons no schools," and the saloon keepers pose as public benefactors.

**A Revenue  
from Vice**

### UNCEASING GAMBLING

In these saloons gambling goes on day and night without the slightest attempt at concealment. The wide doors open upon the streets, and the gamblers seated about tables are plainly seen by the passer-by. Here men who have made small fortunes, and possibly large ones, in the mines sometimes lose all in a few hours. A miner is reported who recently cleaned up \$36,000, went into Fairbanks, got drunk, and lost it all in one night; and he is but one of many. The professional gambler lives and fattens on the hard-earned money of the foolish reckless miner. In the broadest possible sense the town is wide open. There is no apparent respect shown for the Sabbath. Saloons (which are always gambling dens), brothels, stores, shops, mechanical industries, and common labor go forward on the Sabbath as on week days.

**A Wide-  
Open Town**

It is impossible to foretell what the future of Fairbanks will be. Like Jonah's gourd, it has quickly grown to its present proportions, but it may as suddenly wither and die. All will depend upon the extent and richness of the gold mines.

**Speculation at  
High Tide**

Many believe that they will not be exhausted in a century, while others are far less sanguine. New rich strikes are announced by the Fairbanks Evening News almost daily, but nothing is said about mines that at first promise well and then suddenly fail. Booming methods are vigorously applied, and speculation runs at high tide. A new gold field has

been recently discovered on the Kantishina River, near the base of Mount McKinley, 112 miles southwest of Fairbanks, and a "stampede" in that direction has already set in. Whether it will help or hurt this new city remains to be seen. It is certain that capital is becoming timid, and the real estate market is correspondingly dull. Should the railroad which is in process of construction between Seward, on the south coast, and Dawson, a distance of about 500 miles, cross the Tanana River at Fairbanks, its future would be assured. But will it?

### CHURCHES AT FAIRBANKS

There are but three churches in Fairbanks—Presbyterian, Protestant Episcopal, and Roman Catholic. The first will accommodate 150 people, the second 100, and the third 200. The total average attendance of the three congregations probably does not exceed 250. The total membership of the two Protestant churches named does not exceed 75. What is needed here is a man of the tem-

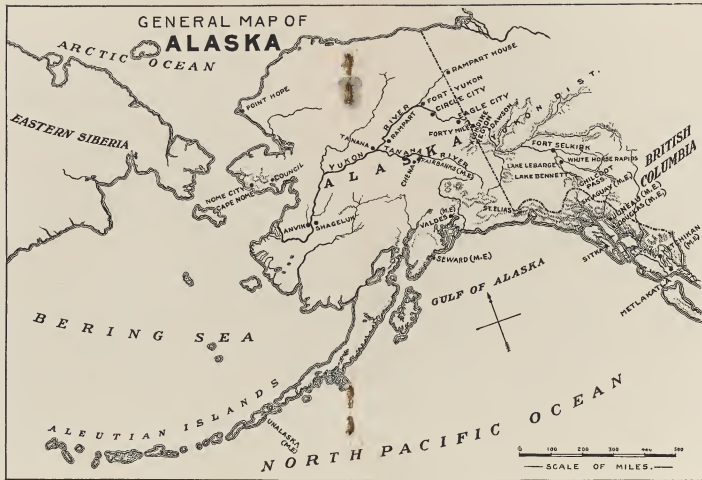
#### A William Taylor Needed

per and spirit of William Taylor, who in the early history of San Francisco could make a pulpit of a dry-goods box, sing like a seraph, and preach like an apostle, and who would go into the streets lined with gambling dens and thronged with men of all ages, attract them with sacred songs, and preach to them the unsearchable riches of Christ. The Methodist Episcopal Church has somewhere another William Taylor, who should be found and sent to this needy godless city. There should be provided for his occupancy a parsonage and a church building where he could gather the fruit of his labor. The work of the Lord should be carried on here as openly and vigorously as is the work of the devil.

In the person of Dr. John Parsons we have a wise, able, and devoted superintendent, but it is impossible for him to do the aggressive work demanded in Fairbanks and at the same time supervise the work in general. At great sacrifice he

#### Heroic Service

and his noble wife have cheerfully accepted the task of founding the Methodist Episcopal Church in this city, where during the coming long, cold winter they will live in a log cabin of two small rooms, and subsist upon such food



MAP OF ALASKA, SHOWING METHODIST MISSION STATIONS

These are indicated by (M. E.) The map is adapted from one published by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church, by courtesy of that society



as can be obtained in a miner's camp. The stress and strain is too great to be endured for any considerable time, and assistance should be quickly afforded. There are already a number of Methodists in this new city, some from the States and some from Canada, who will form the nucleus of the new organization, which there is good reason to believe will in the not distant future be self-supporting. This is the strategic hour and must not be permitted to pass unimproved. The bishop in charge should find the needed man with the necessary qualifications, the Missionary Society should give him ample support, and the Board of Church Extension should provide a parsonage and suitable houses of worship. We have the machinery, and here is an opportunity that should promptly and effectively set it in motion.

## FAIRBANKS TO NOME

Leaving Fairbanks by steamer upon the Tanana River, we return to the Yukon and follow that river to where it discharges its waters into Norton Sound, and thence to Saint Michaels, where we take ship for Nome, another of the great mining camps of Alaska, situated a few miles west by north from Cape Nome on the Bering Sea. As there is no harbor, ships cast anchor in a roadstead two or three miles from shore, and all freight and passengers must land and ship upon lighters, steam launches, and rowboats—no easy task when the sea is rough, as is frequently the case.

In 1898, when gold was discovered on this coast, Nome was an obscure and almost unknown Eskimo village, utterly oblivious of the vast wealth buried beneath the sand upon which it stood and the mountainous territory lying inland. Now there is an estimated population of 4,000.

The whole immediate coast line for many miles has been dug up, and mines have been extensively opened in the adjacent territory extending back into the mountains 20 or 30 miles. A narrow gauge railroad has been built from the coast across the marshy plain to the foothills, about 15 miles distant, and is to be lengthened indefinitely to reach mining camps farther up in the mountain range. This is the most northerly railroad in the world. The ground upon which



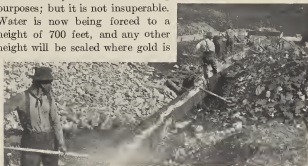
it is built is spongy and marshy, and the roadbed is the worst I have ever seen. There are several other mining districts said to be very rich, known as Solomon, Council, Bluff, Kona-grok, and still others in the farther north. There are vast tracts of unexplored territory in Alaska, which are believed to be as rich as that now being worked.

### A GOOD BARGAIN

The United States paid Russia \$7,200,000 gold for Alaska, while the amount of gold already taken out is not far from \$100,000,000. Much of the quartz is of low grade, producing not more than \$3 to the ton, but with modern machinery can be taken out at a large profit. There are mines now being worked where the gold-bearing quartz cannot be exhausted in a century. Extensive

#### Nature's Great Scrap Heap

and rich placer mines are now being worked at Fairbanks, Seward, Nome, and other places. Looking at the vast territory along the coast and far into the interior, piled high with mountains and apparently worthless, one can hardly think of it as other than nature's great "scrap heap." But though a scrap heap, it contains much in the line of minerals—gold, iron, tin, copper, coal, oil, and gypsum of immense value. The greatest obstacle to be overcome here, as in the Klondike and the Fairbanks districts, is the scarcity of water for mining purposes; but it is not insuperable. Water is now being forced to a height of 700 feet, and any other height will be scaled where gold is



SLUICING OUT THE GOLD AT A KLONDIKE CLAIM

found in paying quantities. Nome now has the appearance of greater solidity than either Dawson or Fairbanks, and if the territory for which it is the seaport proves to be as rich in placer and quartz mines and other minerals as many prospectors claim it is, it is destined to have a rapid and continuous growth.

Here at Nome there are three churches—Roman Catholic, Protestant Episcopal, and Congregational—reaching practically but a small per cent of the people. Vice is prevalent, though

**A Neglected Field** less open and shameless here than in Fairbanks. Saloons are numerous, and in every instance are gambling dens, but this practice is carried on usually behind screened doors. The Sabbath is ignored, and business of all kinds goes on as on week days. Here, as at Fairbanks, the Methodist Episcopal Church has been negligent of its opportunities and duty. More people are here who were Methodists at home than of any other Protestant denomination. They wonder why it is that the authorities of their church have been so negligent. Not finding a place of worship of their own denomination many drift away into indifference and ungodliness. Upon no denomination does a greater, or so great, a responsibility rest to supply religious privileges to these far northwest mining centers as upon the Methodist Episcopal Church.

## ALASKA AGRICULTURE

The agricultural possibilities of the interior of Alaska are as yet an unsolved problem. The general government has established several experimental farms on a small scale, and the

**Experimental Farms** results to date are regarded, as upon the whole, quite satisfactory. That there are vast valleys along the Yukon, Tanana, and other rivers, with rich soil, is fully demonstrated; but whether in view of climatic conditions they can be profitably cultivated is the important question. The winters are long and the summers short. As already stated anywhere in these valleys ice is reached in mid-summer at a depth of two or three feet. Consequently vegetable life cannot root deeply. The roots of the forest trees are matted upon the surface and when upturned look like immense spiders.

They naturally avoid the ice, which is always near, and remain upon the surface, where in summer they secure the needed warmth. But it is claimed that there are compensations. The soil is very rich after it is tamed, and the summer days are very long. Beginning with the middle of May and on to the first of September there is practically no night, and, consequently, there is no time lost in the growth of vegetation. The surface soil warms quickly, and growth is rapid and constant. Besides, the moisture caused by the slowly melting ice by capillary attraction rises and nourishes vegetation, so that if there should be a scarcity of summer showers, which rarely occurs, there would be no drought. It is already fully proven that potatoes, turnips, carrots, radishes, peas, beans, cabbage, spinach, and cauliflower flourish here. Wild fruits, such as blueberries, huckleberries, red raspberries, black and red currants, gooseberries, cranberries, and salmon berries, are found in great abundance. Tomatoes and cucumbers flourish if well started in hothouses. Cereals, such as spring wheat, barley, and oats, have been successfully produced. The central and northern parts of Norway and Sweden are about as far north as the Yukon valley, and agriculture is successfully carried on in those countries. Were as large populations here as there are in those countries they would find it easier to subsist, as the soil is naturally richer. But it is not likely that farmers will flock to these northern regions in large numbers while there are vast areas of rich agricultural lands in more southern latitudes.

## CLIMATE

All who have wintered here claim that the climate is less trying than in the middle and eastern states. While the cold is sometimes intense, the atmosphere is very dry. When winter comes it remains without a thaw until the time for its final departure arrives. Besides, there are no high winds. There is rarely a time in the long winter nights when a candle cannot be used outdoors as readily as indoors. The miners use candles above ground and under ground in preference to kerosene or oil lamps. It is seldom that anyone freezes to

death who is sober. Winter is the favorite season to "mush" on the trails. The word "mush" is said to be a perversion of the word "march." A foreigner who found it difficult to say march substituted "mush," and his fellow travelers adopted it, and now it is in universal use. Say to a Yukon dog "get out,"

**The Indispensable Dog** and he pays not the slightest attention, but say "mush," and he instantly moves on. On the trail in winter, as well as for other purposes, the dog is indispensable, and consequently he is very numerous.

In the summer the streets are thronged with the canine species. It is the period of his vacation, and he is treated with great respect. He stretches himself calmly in the middle of the street, on the



Courtesy of Leslie's Weekly

#### ON THE TRAIL IN WINTER THE DOGS ARE INDISPENSABLE

sidewalk, in the doors of business houses and cabins, and is seldom required to change his location. A teamster will turn aside and drive past, or a footman will yield the sidewalk if necessary while "Bruno" slumbers on undisturbed. In walking a distance of five blocks in Fairbanks I counted one hundred dogs. Often in the twilight of the summer night the dogs join in a howl concert, and then the welkin rings. For downright dismalness the howl of the dogs has no equal. But when winter comes

**The Winter Beast of Burden** then Bruno has something to do besides thronging the streets and giving hideous concerts. Then he is the beast of burden. He is harnessed tandem to sleds and drags supplies to mining camps, and miners' tools and baggage over long trails on stampedes to new

gold fields. He hauls wood to camps and towns and to the banks of rivers to supply steamers during the season for navigation. At one point where our steamer stopped for a fresh supply of wood the woodchopper told the writer that last winter his six dogs hauled 350 cords of wood a distance of half a mile, where it was corded on the bank of the river.

## INHABITANTS

The population of Alaska consists of Indians and white people of various nationalities. The Indians, of whom there are about 36,000, are of the Eskimo stock, and are in important characteristics unlike the American Indian. In south-

### A Vanishing People

eastern Alaska and the Aleutian Islands they strongly resemble the Japanese, and there is good reason to believe that originally they belonged to the Japanese family. But whatever their origin they are rapidly degenerating and decreasing in numbers. The vices of the white man, from the time of the Russian occupation and the invasion of the fur-trader until the present, together with the introduction since American occupation of intoxicating liquors, have told sadly and destructively upon these aborigines. When the United States first took possession, and for several years thereafter, the sale of intoxicants was absolutely prohibited, and the natives were thoroughly protected, but the demand for revenue has been heard, and now saloons are licensed by the federal government. Although the law forbids sale to Indians, liquor dealers circumvent and disregard the law, as they do the prohibitive features of all laws where enforcement is lax, and the Indians are in many instances debauched by drunkenness. In the earlier days Russians frequently married or made concubines of Indian women, and the result is seen in a class of half-bloods who are neither

### Squaw-Men

Indian nor Russian, and are despised by both. There are also Americans, known as squaw-men, who have married or are living in adulterous relations with Indian women, and their offspring are naturally outcasts. These people are found on the seacoast and along the rivers in the interior, gaining a precarious existence by hunting and fishing.

Rarely are they engaged in any industries, especially where capital is required. Some of them, both men and women are adept in the manufacture of curios which they profitably vend to tourists and curio collectors.

**The General Trend** The trend of the Indian in Alaska is toward extinction, and it is only a question of time when he will reach the goal, for goal it will be, as there is no probability that he will ever be exalted to anything above a very low grade of civilization. Notwithstanding the successes that have been achieved in some places, by the heroic efforts of Christian missionaries, it is conceded by all that the general trend is in the direction of final disappearance.

### THE WHITE POPULATION

The white population is estimated by Governor Brady at about 30,000, although there are not a few who think the number is greater. At best the number can only be approximated, as it is always changing. It is not only changing in numbers, but very migratory in character. There are town sites that a few years ago boasted populations of thousands where at present there is scarcely an inhabitant. Except in a very few instances all towns fail where there are no mineral deposits to be exploited. Scarcely anybody is here to stay. I have met but one person, and I have questioned many, who expects to make Alaska his permanent home. All are here for gold, and whether they succeed or fail they expect to leave the country at an early day. And yet, doubtless, not a



"ALL ARE HERE FOR GOLD, AND WHETHER THEY SUCCEED OR FAIL, THEY EXPECT TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY AT AN EARLY DAY"

few will remain and become the permanent pioneer residents. Families are now here that will never go outside, and their descendants will be natives of Alaska. The gold-seekers who first went to California did not intend to remain, but some were not able to get out of the country, while others stayed from choice, and so it will be with Alaska and there will be an indigenous population.

The white population is divided into "Che-chackos" and "Sour Doughs." "Che-chacko" is an Indian word and has about the same meaning as our English "tenderfoot." A Che-chacko is one who has just entered the Yukon country and exhibits his lack of information in various ways. "Sour Dough" means dough spoiled in the process of fermentation and baking, resulting in sour bread, upon which miners not infrequently subsist during the winter; therefore a "Sour Dough"

**Old-Timer and Tenderfoot** is one who has been in the country long enough to see the ice go out of the Yukon at least once and who has acquired information which experience alone can give. The "Sour Dough" sometimes puts on airs and looks upon the "Che-chacko" somewhat as in college a sophomore looks upon a freshman.

## THE COST OF LIVING

Living expenses are enormously high. In a lodging house any kind of a bunk costs \$1 a night, while a room costs from \$2 to \$5 a night and up. I have before me the menu of a café in

**Three Eggs for a Dollar** Fairbanks, and here are samples of prices: Steaks—porterhouse, \$2.50; sirloin, \$2. Ham or bacon, \$1. Mutton chops, \$1.50. Three eggs, any style, \$1. Asparagus, 75 cents. Lettuce, 50 cents. Cucumbers, 50 cents. Coffee

or tea, per cup, 25 cents. In the mines expenses are higher still, as cost of freight from the river to the camps is great. Besides, mining is hard work and unless the miner is generously nourished he cannot endure the strain. The daily cost of economical living in the mines is about \$5, and if luxuries and intoxicating liquors, to say nothing of vices that must be nameless here, are indulged, the expense is greatly increased and even multiplied. Dirt must be rich and economy rigid if the miner accumulates a

fortune rapidly. Probably not more than one in ten leaves the mines richer than when he came, while the majority are poorer both in purse and character. The gold they dig often passes swiftly through their hands, without improving their condition either materially or morally, and finding its way into the channels of trade leaves the miners, who by hard toil extracted it from the earth, wrecks by the way. And yet it should be said that a man with good health, industry, and economy, can even with moderate success secure gold enough in a few years to make him comfortable for the remaining years of his life.

### ALASKAN METHODISM

The Methodist Episcopal Church has accomplished but little in Alaska, for the reason that it has attempted but little. Slow to enter the country, it has been feeble in its efforts, and consequently success has been small. Until the recent  
In Ketchikan Annual Meeting we have touched only slightly the southeastern border of the country. In Ketchikan, a thriving town at the southeastern extremity of the country, with a population of about 1,000, and the distributing point for a large tract of mining country, we have a neat church and parsonage which have been refitted and improved during the past year. The Rev. J. A. Chapman is the pastor and has scored a signal success. Here the Annual Meeting of the Mission was  
Douglas and Juneau held June 27, 1905, under the direction of Bishop David H. Moore, whose presence and ministry were a source of great encouragement to the preachers and inspiration to the work. Up the coast 250 miles from Ketchikan are the towns of Douglas and Juneau, on nearly opposite sides of the bay, the former having a population of 1,650 and the latter 2,000. Douglas is the site of the great Treadwell quartz mines, where a vast amount of gold is taken out annually, and where the quality of gold-bearing quartz is inexhaustible, and where is an additional population of 600. Here we have an inferior church with very poor parsonage accommodations adjoining. The Rev. L. B. Pedersen has been the industrious and enterprising pastor for two years, and the church is now being





METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND PARSONAGE AT KETCHIKAN



JUNEAU, "THE MOST PROSPEROUS TOWN IN SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA"

served by the Rev. R. V. B. Dunlap. This church needs to be renovated and enlarged by using the rooms heretofore occupied as a parsonage for church purposes. At the most prosperous

**Juneau** town in southeastern Alaska, Juneau, the Rev. F. A. La

Violette has been the pastor for two years, and has accomplished a great work under very difficult conditions. Two years ago he commenced his work here at zero; we owned nothing and had no membership. Now we have a commodious frame



METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH AT JUNEAU

church, centrally located, well furnished, with an auditorium that will seat 250 people, a lecture room adjoining, and a basement with gymnasium, bath, and reading rooms, the cost of the whole, including the lot, having been about \$12,000. The

**Skaguay** Board of Church Extension purchased the lot at a cost of \$4,000, and the money to erect the building was raised on the ground. The whole is paid for except about \$800, the greater part of which is pledged. Up the coast 100 miles farther at the

head of the Lynn Canal, is Skaguay, boasting a population in 1898 of 8,000, but which at this time does not exceed 1,000. Previous to the building of the White Pass Railroad all miners entering the Klondike country landed here, and largely procured



THE LEADING STREET OF SKAGUAY

their outfit for taking the trail across the mountains. As a merchandising town it grew quickly to large dimensions, and it as quickly faded away when the railroad from the head of Lynn Canal was completed across the White Pass to White Horse, on the headwaters of the Yukon River, thus providing for transportation of passengers and freight direct from Canada and the States to the Klondike. Here we have a neat property consisting of church and parsonage, out of debt. Dr. John Parsons, the Superintendent of the Mission, was pastor here for two years and accomplished all that could have been expected. At the recent Annual Meeting the Rev. J. Wesley Glenk was appointed pastor.

Bishop Moore decided to open two new points this year—Fairbanks, on the Tanana River, and Seward, at the head of

Resurrection Bay on the north coast of the Gulf of Alaska. Seward is the base of supply for a large mining district where there are rich deposits of gold, coal, copper, tin, and other minerals. It is also the terminus of a railroad, 25 miles of which is now in operation. It is to be constructed through the new gold fields recently discovered near the base of Mount McKinley to Fairbanks, or to some other point on the Tanana River, and on to the Yukon, a total distance of about 500 miles. It is conceded by all that Seward

**Two New  
Points**



METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND PARSONAGE AT SKAGWAY

is to be a very important point on the south coast of Alaska. To this new point the Rev. L. B. Pedersen was appointed. Courageously, with his heroic wife and four children, he goes to a town in which we own nothing and in which no shelter had been obtained for himself and family.

### THE INDIANS

Considerable missionary work is being done among the Indians by the Presbyterians, Protestant Episcopal, Roman Catholic, and Russian Orthodox Greek Churches. The Methodist Episcopal Church has not as yet commenced work in the in-

terest of these people, except at Unalaska, where there is an Industrial Home for Indian children, under the auspices of the Woman's Home Missionary

Unalaska Society.

The most interesting and important piece of Indian mission work the writer has seen is at New Metlakatla, on Annette Island.

The history of this Indian mission is most interesting. In 1856 Mr. William Duncan, a Yorkshire Englishman, and a layman, became a missionary to the wild and savage tribes in the vicinity of Fort Simpson, British Columbia. The

William Duncan bishop of the Church of England in Canada urged him to accept clerical orders, which he declined, believing

that he could render his best service as a layman. The account the writer heard him give of the perils to which he was exposed, his privations and hairbreadth escapes from death at the hands of the savages, was most thrilling. He spent eight months among them, mastering their language before he attempted to utter a word in public, or to give religious instruction. Finally, when he had so far mastered the language as to be able to speak intelligently, he arranged for services on one Sabbath in the wigwams of eight chiefs, when he preached the same sermon in each wigwam. In these services the Indians heard prayer to the true God and listened to the message of salvation through Jesus Christ for the first time and with deepest interest. The next morning an old Indian woman met an officer of the fort and exclaimed, "The people are all awed; we have heard the Word of God."



INDIAN TOTEM POLE AT SITKA, SAID TO BE THE FINEST IN ALASKA

## NEW METLAKAHTLA

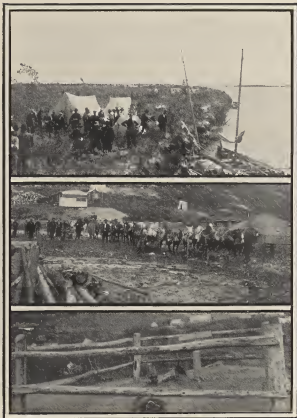
A bishop of the Church of England in Canada persisted in demanding that the work should be under his jurisdiction, and Mr. Duncan as persistently refused to submit for the reason that he did not believe the Indians were capable of understanding the rites and ceremonies of that church. The result was that Mr. Duncan left Fort Simpson and transferred his people to Annette Island, leaving the property he had accumulated behind. The island contains sixty square miles, and was at the time of the transfer an unbroken forest. Seeing

**Moving a  
Mission**



AT NEW METLAKAHTLA  
Dr. Leonard, Mr. William Duncan, and Dr. Parsons

the necessity of protection against the traders of the coast and their vices, Mr. Duncan went to Washington and asked the President and Congress to grant the island named above for the exclusive use of his Indian colony. The grant was made, and Mr. Duncan was given absolute control of the island, and no trader can transact business with the natives. The President has appointed Mr. Duncan commissioner for his people, and he is their sole ruler.



THE BRIGHT AND DARK SIDES OF GOLD MINING

Miners Stranded and Destitute at Fort Yukon  
Leaving a Klondike Claim with a Season's Output of Gold  
The Last Resting Place of a Discouraged Argonaut—A Suicide

New Metlakahtla was founded seventeen years ago, and there is now a population of seven hundred. The town is regularly laid out with wide streets, in which the stumps of trees remain.

**The Most Im-  
portant Building** The streets are not graded, and, except the parts occupied by board walks, are grown up with underbrush. The houses are frame, commodious as to size, usually two stories high, and without partitions, so that, as a rule, the houses have each two rooms, one below and one above. There are a sawmill, a fish cannery, and a community store, where supplies of all kinds are sold at reasonable prices. There is a good schoolhouse, and all children of proper age are required to attend school. The most prominent and important building in the town is the house of worship, which is the center of interest to all the people. The edifice is substantially built of wood, well finished, and will seat seven hundred people, the entire population of the town. Mr. Duncan preaches to his people twice each Sabbath, and has the oversight of all religious as well as secular affairs. He is seventy-three years of age, hale and hearty, and may easily serve his people for another decade. There has not been a murder committed by a member of the community in thirty-five years, and there is rarely an offense which requires a judicial investigation. When one remembers that these people were barbarians of the lowest type when Mr. Duncan found them, and notes the progress that has been made, he may well exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

### AN INDIAN SERVICE

On Sabbath afternoon, at Ketchikan, in connection with the Annual Meeting of the Mission, there was held an Indian service, under the direction of a native local preacher. About fifty Indians were present, representing three tribes—Tsimshians, Hydahs, and Thlinkets. The local preacher spoke in English, and his message was translated into two dialects by two Indians, after which the meeting was open for remarks by the public. Several spoke in their native tongue and offered prayer. One, Rev. Edward Marsden, who was educated at Marietta College, Ohio, and is now a minister of the Presbyterian Church, spoke



in good English, and called attention to the fact that a meeting of three tribes could not have been held under the same roof fifty years ago without bloodshed. Then these three tribes were deadly enemies, and met only to shed blood. Then they were clothed in skins of animals or blankets; now they are in civilized costume and meet as brothers. The gospel of Christ alone, he asserted, had brought about the change.

**A College**

**Trained Indian**

**An Urgent**

**Responsibility**

Alaska is a difficult field, and large results in statistics cannot be expected at an early day. The population is transient and constantly changing as new mining districts are opened, but it should not on that account be longer neglected. It is a part of our country, and many of our Methodist people, and others for whom we are responsible for religious privileges, are going there, and will continue to go in increasing numbers. We must care for them or be rightly charged with neglecting a very important duty. No man who has a heart can go through Alaska and see the multitude of young men who are "mushing" to the mines, exposed to all the temptations and vices of a new mining country, and note the many that have already become wrecks, without being deeply stirred and intensely anxious to throw around them the restraints which the Christian Church alone can furnish. Heretofore Alaska has been to me only a name. But now, having seen it, its vastness, and its crying needs, it is more than a name; it is an empire of untold wealth and possibilities, already containing a considerable population, and destined, as its vast mineral resources are exploited, to be thronged with the best young life of the American nation. Alaska should be taken seriously by the Methodist Episcopal Church, and provided for generously.





